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ABSTRACT

On behalf of a national committee advising the Australian Minister of Education, two consultants prepared separate evaluations of language policy statements from the states of Victoria, South Australia, and Queensland. The three statements all support the teaching of languages other than English (LOTEs) in the public school system, but differ widely in frame of reference, target audience, program objectives, priorities, and level of commitment. Both papers agree that Victoria most strongly supports LOTE programs, presenting a policy which is substantial in its content, clarity of thinking, and implementation strategies. The Victoria statement expresses a genuine commitment to a multicultural policy which encompasses not only language experience and learning, but also first-language maintenance and the affirmation of cultural identity through language learning. Queensland has not fully resolved the immense struggles of the last decade about the issues of language teaching, community languages, and ethnic identity. The Queensland document, produced by a task force within the multicultural education apparatus rather than the Education Department, appears to be talking to the power brokers of the education system, attempting to obtain some recognition for multicultural education, thus far denied at the highest levels. The South Australia statement makes no firm commitment to increasing resources and support, but couches its recommendations in cloudy rhetoric. (SV)

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NACCME COMMISSIONED RESEARCH PAPER NO 1

Three Language Policy Statements: Two Evaluations

One by Helen Andreoni and the other by Uldis Ozolins

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NACCME COMMISSIONED RESEARCH PAPER NO.1

THREE LANGUAGE POLICY STATEMENTS:
TWO EVALUATIONS.

ONE BY HELEN ANDREONI AND THE OTHER BY ULDIS OZOLINS.

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NATIONAL ADVISORY AND CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE ON MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

PREFACE

The National Advisory and Co-ordinating Committee on Multicultural Education (NACCME) was established by the Minister for Education (and Youth Affairs), Senator Susan Ryan, on 27 March 1984, following from the Government's acceptance of Recommendation 29 of the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs Evaluation of Post-Arrival Programs and Services to Migrants (May 1985).

NACCME's Terms of Reference are to:

(i) advise the Minister for Education on matters relating to multicultural education;

(ii) co-ordinate, monitor and review multicultural programs and activities;

(iii) determine an appropriate procedure for information exchange and put that procedure into practice.

NACCME's main function is to provide advice on the needs of multicultural education across a broad spectrum, from pre-school to higher education and information education mechanisms such as the media. The Commonwealth Department of Education provides the Secretariat for the Committee.

At its inaugural meeting, Senator Ryan suggested that the Committee develop a major policy document on multicultural education, and this was taken up as a major task for NACCME over the past three years. On 26 May 1987 NACCME's policy document Education In and For a Multicultural Society: Issues and Strategies for Policy Making was officially launched.

In developing this major policy document NACCME sought input from outside experts by commissioning a number of background research papers.

NACCME is pleased to now release a series of seven papers comprising eight commissioned research papers which had direct input into our own document.

We hope that these papers will add to the pool of information available on, and constructive discussion of, issues in multicultural education.

The views expressed in these papers are not necessarily those of NACCME itself.

This paper entitled Three Language Policy Statements: Two Evaluations is the first of NACCME's Commissioned Research Papers Series. It comprises two separate papers on the same topic. The first is by Dr Helen Andreoni, Senior Lecturer at the Centre for Multicultural Studies, Armidale College for Advanced Education and entitled Comparative Analysis and Critique of the Language Policy Statements from Victoria, South Australia and Queensland (as at June 1985).

This paper was completed for NACCME in September 1985.

The second, Three Language Policy Statements: An Evaluation is by Uldis Ozolins, Lecturer at the Department of Languages and Culture Studies, Victoria College (Toorak Campus) in Melbourne.

This paper was completed for NACCME in October 1985.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

NACCME asked both consultants to prepare a 3,000-5,000 word report incorporating a comparative and critical analysis and comment on language policy papers from the States of Victoria, Queensland and South Australia.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS AND CRITIQUE OF THE LANGUAGE POLICY STATEMENTS FROM VICTORIA, SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND QUEENSLAND.

(as at June, 1985)

Dr. Helen Andreoni,
Centre for Multicultural Studies,
Armidale College of Advanced Education.

September 30, 1985

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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS AND CRITIQUE OF THE LANGUAGE POLICY STATEMENTS FROM VICTORIA, SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND QUEENSLAND.

INTRODUCTION

It is very difficult to compare such very diverse language policy documents as those of Victoria, Queensland and South Australia. They are different not only in format but in conceptual base, historical experience, aims and bureaucratic underpinnings. Nor is it clear to me how language policy documents can be separated from multicultural policy documents which make reference to language policy issues. The New South Wales and recently released Tasmanian policy documents should therefore have been included in any such analysis and critique if the aim of the commissioned work is to get an overview of language policies at State level.

A FRAMEWORK FOR THE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS AND CRITIQUE

Policy documents are designed to reach different audiences. This determines their language, their rhetoric and their length. Important as they are, however, policy documents do not tell the full story. The existence of documents does not automatically indicate a greater level of commitment or the introduction of new initiatives. To understand them fully they have to be analysed with reference not only to aims but also to the level of support given to the language learner, the language teacher and the native speakers in the community.

NALYSIS AND COMPARISON OF THE POLICY STATEMENTS

Aims

Some of the aims to be found in the documents in question are:

- An indication that greater priority will be given to language programs in the future with positive new aims and a commitment to the greater allocation of resources. (Vic.)

- A confirmation of commitment to a particular direction already taken by existing language programs. The policy underpinning of what already exists in the field. (Qld., Vic.)

- A declaration of support for language programs without higher priority or more resources being given. (S.A., Qld.)

- A defence of past practices and lack of language programs justified because of past and present lack of resources. (Qld., S.A.)

- A way of containing criticisms that there has not been in the past, sufficient support and resources given to language programs. (Qld., S.A., Vic.)

- A pulling back from past commitment, priorities and allocation of resources previously given to support language programs. (S.A.)

The only aim all documents share is their reaction to criticisms of inadequate support for language programs in the past.

Audience

The Queensland document appears to be talking to the power brokers of the education system. It is designed to emphasise how non-threatening and feasible it is to introduce language programs into the school without causing disruptions to mainstream activities or draining scarce resources. As with any promotional materials such a document has to be kept short.

The South Australian policy appears to be directed at everyone and no one. To the language teachers and supporters of language programs it seeks to justify the lack of immediate success or current support for language programs in spite of the considerable investment of energy and resources. To those who see Languages Other Than English programs as only one of many priorities, it declares pithily that what can be done will be done in this area wherever possible within the constraints of available resources.

The Victorian document is designed to reach those already committed and working in the language field. The information is designed to create a sense of solidarity. It becomes then an expression of institutionalised support, a contract for future commitment, an in-depth analysis of the issues sorted into clear categories for the busy practitioner.

Resources

All documents acknowledge explicitly or implicity the importance of language programs being supported by one or more of the following:

- Non-annual funding
- Material and non-material resources
- administrative support
- community support from English and non-English speakers
- continuity in programs and staffing
- adequate time allocation
- integration within and across the curriculum
- evaluation
- qualified language teachers
- selection and promotion for teachers
- inservice, language training, professional development, exchange

However, there are differing degrees of commitment to the supplying of those resources or making such resources a high priority.

In Queensland, support for language programs is seen as the exclusive province of M.E.C.C. and not the responsibility of the Queensland Education Department. The size of the Q.M.E.C.C. budget means that very few Queensland language programs will get adequate resources and support.

The South Australian document makes no commitment to increasing resources and support, referring to "constraints of available human material resources" and hedging any affirmation with "at some time", "whenever possible" along with appropriately vague non-committal statements such as "The Department will do its best" or making reference to "adequate instruction time" without being explicit.

The Victorian document in its recommendations asks the Victorian Government to move beyond reliance on annual outside funding and rhetorical affirmation policy statements to a long term financial and ethical commitment. It states that programs, to be effective, require specific target dates, implementation strategies, teacher training, professional development, curriculum innovation, research, consultancy support and structural support. The document also insists that there needs to be on-going monitoring of the needs of the different types of language programs and language learners. It asks for greater financial commitment on the part of government and education systems and that higher priority be given across the board to the learning of LOTE. There is little doubt that currently, Victoria is the State expressing the greatest support for language programs both at policy level and in the field and is prepared to demand that they be adequately staffed, resourced and supported.

Authorship

Differences between the policy documents reflect differences in aims, audiences and level of systemic support.

They are also the inevitable result of the fact that these documents have been written by very different authors and bureaucracies.

The Queensland paper was prepared by the Q.M.E.C.C., to assist potential grantees to understand the basic language issues and to prepare submissions.

The South Australian paper was prepared by the Education Department of South Australia as an affirmation of the place of languages in the curriculum.

The Victorian paper was prepared jointly by the State Board of Education and M.A.C.M.M.E. to enable schools to implement the newly developed government policy on language teaching.

It would be easy to persist in highlighting the differences and incompatabilities of the three language policy documents particularly in the areas of aims, audience, level of systemic support and authorship. It is important however, not to lose sight of significant similarities.

Similarities

The most obvious similarity is that all three States and/or M.E.C.C. committees feel that the teaching of languages other than English is of sufficient importance to merit a language policy document. This was not so some five years ago and is not even true of all States. Their existence must in part be attributed to the preparation and debate that surrounded the development of a National Language Policy.

Acknowledgement must also be given to the long term planning and extensive consultation that went into the evolution of these documents.

All three States must have drawn on data base about the overseas born and the use of languages other than English in the school and the community. This information is available and accessible thanks to the 1981 census and the research undertaken by the Schools Commission, the State M.E.C.C.S., the systemic education systems and the National Language Policy committee. The collection of data has to be made more frequent and systematic but its existence at least allows those interested to use the information and to move beyond the head-counting stage. Only South Australia does not refer explicitly to this data.

There is a far greater clarity in the use of terminology than existed five years ago. All use an umbrella term Languages Other Than English which refers to the language needs of children whether first or second language learners, native or non-native speakers, as well as community, foreign, modern or traditional language programs. There was a time in the process of clarifying key issues in the language policy debate when these and other distinctions had to be made and viewed separately. It appears a new stage has been reached where all are happy to use the term Languages Other Than English. Apart from the decision to use the non-divisive umbrella term Languages Other Than English, the labels used to distinguished language programs and learners reflect different priorities. Queensland refers to language awareness, language

learning and bilingual education programs. The South Australian document makes no reference to the needs of different language learners and programs or any reference to the relationship with native speakers and ethnic communities. Victoria refers to second language learning, mother-tongue maintenance and language teaching for the affirmation of cultural identity.

These language policies do not always explicitly extend to Aboriginal languages. The Queensland document refers to Aboriginal languages as a national resource but makes no other reference to Aboriginal language speakers. The South Australian document makes no specific reference to Aboriginal languages whilst the Victorian document makes a passing reference to Aboriginal languages but proposes to address this issue in a separate document in the future. The implications of any inclusion of Aboriginal languages under the heading of Languages Other Than English do not seem to have been fully explored as yet.

CONCLUSION

Much of the National Language Policy debate centred on establishing the nexus between Multicultural Policy and the teaching and maintenance of Languages Other Than English.

For many, the degree of commitment to language policy, programs and resources is an indicator of the genuineness of a government's commitment to Multicultural Policy beyond the level of lip-service and rhetoric. Taken at face-value, without reference to other reports or current practice, these

policy documents suggest that only Victoria appears to have made a genuine commitment to a multicultural policy which encompasses not only language experience and learning but also language maintenance and the affirmation of cultural identity through language learning.

In Australia today, it is impossible to make a commitment to the teaching and maintenance of Languages Other Than English without increased resources, careful long-term planning and a language policy which is developed after extensive and effective consultation with ethnic communities. Equally important is the existence of implementation strategies which ensure the continued involvement and support of all those who are concerned to see that Languages Other Than English survive and are taught effectively in the Australian school. Queensland's strategy to use Q.M.E.C.C. resources and representation,, voluntary language resource people and existing "Foreign" language programs suggests that language progams will not flourish in this State. South Australia's vague departmental document which confines itself to platitudes after so many years of experience with funding and promoting language programs and building links with ethnic communities, is disappointing indeed. It is impossible to tread water as far as language programs are concerned, the commitment has to be constant and generous both in the allocation of resources and philosophical direction. The South Australian Department of Education, at least in the document under discussion, no longer appears to be a leader in the field of teaching Languages Other Than English. This

leaves us with the Victorian Policy which is substantial in its content, clarity of thinking and implementation strategies. The experience and insights gained in the process of developing this policy document should not only benefit that State but could well act as a model for others. This Language Policy document has the potential to rekindle some of the hope and enthusiasm that was generated during the discussions that preceded the publication of the National Language Policy document. If successful, it could prove that Australia has the capacity to maintain and develop its language resources.

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September 30, 1985

Three language policy statements

An evaluation

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October, 1985

Comments on three language policy statements

The three statements from Victoria, South Australia and Queensland are all designed to order, support and propagate the teaching of languages other than English (LOTEs). They nevertheless reveal crucial differences in

* the scope of their inquiry and terms of reference
* the need for and objectives of LOTE programs
* conceptualization of languages and of programs
* issues of commitment, testability and criteria of success

A brief summary of similarities and differences may set the groundwork for the following discussion:

Both Queensland and Victorian statements, explicitly concerned with the teaching of languages spoken in a multicultural Australia, and explicitly setting out a variety of language teaching objectives and programs, reveal in their sharply differing conclusions and concerns the historically distinct development of ethnic communities, ethnic community languages and the salience of multiculturalism in their respective states. While seemingly almost at odds with each other over specific objectives of language teaching, they do faithfully reflect not only the educational but the broader social processes that constrain and maintain languages and language education in their two constituencies.

The South Australian statement is almost totally different in purpose and temper: it is an attempt, after a little reference to multiculturalism, to provide a 'language-neutral' argument for the teaching of LOTEs, with almost no explicit reference to ethnic community languages, and no concern with identifying desireable varieties of language programs. It is a statement that is urbane, sophisticated, mindful of institutional imperatives, but appears to be curiously unrelated historically to the various moves to promote ethnic community languages in South Australia. Nevertheless, it presents a particular model of language policy that could be instructive for the future.

Scope of inquiry and terms of reference

The South Australian and Victorian statements (henceforth S.A. and V.) are concerned with system-wide moves for language education, and with building an infrastructure - in staff, curriculum and administrative support - that can maintain language learning as a vital element in their state's schooling system. The Queensland statement (henceforth Q.) is concerned very much more with suggesting 'broad guidelines for teachers in schools seeking funding for LOTE programs through the Grants Scheme offered by the Queensland Multicultural Coordinating Committee', and wider <u>systemic</u> questions are addressed only through the diffuse promotion of multiculturalism

with no specific institutional and resource issues identified.

V. and S.A. are basically implementing documents for previously announced and more general education policy, formulated at the highest levels: in Victoria the emphatic pronouncement of Ministerial Paper 6 asking each school to 'ensure that its program enables students progressively to...acquire proficiency in another language used in the Australian community'(V:1), and in South Australia the policy document 'Into the 1980s: our schools and their purposes' with its much gentler language of encouraging 'wherever possible' the teaching of LOTEs because it is 'most desirable for people in our multicultural society to be familiar with more than one language.'(S.A:Languages in the Curriculum)

Q. stands in sharp contrast to this: as a statement on language it gives evidence of the most serious awareness of its environment, an environment in which multicultural education still needs to establish itself, to the extent of adopting and explaining a vocabulary and set of descriptions that can henceforth be perhaps effective in educational decision-making processes. Reading Q. this always needs to be kept in mind, as its purposes and ambit differ quite markedly from the Victorian document: this latter has come with a different pedigree and addresses a different audience: not only the educational decision-making audience, but a much broader, more confident and better situated cadre of community language teachers and advocates, already in charge of ongoing programs and with clear demands for their development.

Because of the broadly implimenting and elaborative nature of V. and S.A., no terms of reference as such are mentioned in them. In contrast Q, produced by a task force within the multicultural education apparatus and not by a body more broadly based within the Education Department,does have specific terms of reference. These terms of reference should perhaps worry NACCME as they attest to the very precarious foothold of multicultural education within that state. The terms of reference cited (Q:1) illustrate i) how little the basis of multicultural education is understood and supported at any level of Queensland education, and ii) how the promoters of multicultural and LOTE education within Queensland need to present their case: as both a social and 'scientific' rationale for the study of LOTEs, with an almost beginner's elaboration of 'sets of terms', 'claims', 'benefits', 'feasability of attainment' and 'set of principles'. This is not to say that these factors should not be considered in the introduction of any new aspect of the curriculum, but it is testimony to just how 'new'

these concerns are in Queensland, and to the particular way the authors feel that multicultural education is perceived and needs to be defended: the authors see themselves as standing very much outside the mainstream of Queensland education and needing to convince not only by repeated appeals to multiculturalism but by elaboration of basic terminology and outlining of a legitimating scientific rationale. This gives at times a defensive, at other times a slightly hectoring quality to Q: support from the top is clearly absent, but so too is a clear grass roots constituency as in Victoria. While V. and S.A. are essentially 'top-down' documents written under full authority from the highest level of decision-making, Q. is a 'bottom-up' endeavour, hoping perhaps to convince those at the top but realizing how little anyone in schools is convinced.

The need for, and objectives of, LOTE programs

Each document does attempt to outline the perceived need for, and objectives of, LOTE programs in schools.

V.can base itself upon a by now solidly entrenched tradition of LOTE learning within and without the schooling system, and its objectives no longer need to be stated in vacuo. V. attempts to establish language needs and objectives of the broadest kind, adopting the Senate's National Language Policy inquiry's three guiding principles of competence in English, maintenance and development of LOTEs, and opportunity for second language learning for all (V:3).

From this point on, V. and Q. follow each other closely, listing cognitive and linguistic benefits of language learning, particularly in the case of native LOTE speakers gaining a level of proficiency in their first language; political, economic and utilitarian benefits; and, with Q. rather more emphatic on this than V, a range of social benefits related to the position of the Non-English speaking child in school: the ability to maintain close familial ties by valuing the child's home culture, providing support and overcoming feelings of embarrassment or inadequacy on the part of NES children faced with a different school culture, preserving cultural heritage and identity. In Q. also stress is placed on Developing an Acceptance of Cultural Diversity, by making all students aware of the multilingual nature of Australian society and, for speakers of English as a mother tongue, through learning in an LOTE progrmm 'students can comprehend the frustrations frequently experienced by non-English speakers living in Australia'(Q:2). More mildly, V. claims that children through these programs 'are able to experience differences in a positive, non-threatening manner'(V:3).

The problem with such claims is not their extravagance or optimism; rather, it is the problem of having far too few viable programs

so far to be able to assess whether these values can be realized and these objectives met. To a large extent also, many of the claims are by now well-rehearsed arguments against not having any multicultural components or LOTEs in schools, a position now increasingly in retreat in Victoria but evidently still quite alive in Queensland.

The first and simplest argument advanced in all three statements for increased teaching of LOTEs is population change in Australian society: Q. places this first in mentioning reasons for teaching LOTEs (Q:2), while S.A. mentions both the 'central place which languages hold in a multicultural society' and educational/cognitive reasons (S.A:Foreword).

Both V. and Q. give specific population data. It should be noted that there are crucially different figures regarding the Queensland population in V. and Q: Q's figures (based on the 1981 Census) give a much higher estimate of the numbers of LOTE speakers in that State than the figures produced in V. (based on a 1983 survey of language use) (Q:2 cf V:5). The difference lies not in the different dates of survey (even in Queensland language loss is not that rapid!) but in the problem of the 1981 Census question. However, the Q's own figure might be able to be used politically: given the huge overestimation of language use in the 1981 Census is due primarily to respondents counting their school language as a LOTE, it can make sense for an educational document to pursue its policies on the basis of this figure. (Even though Q's figure does make Queensland the most multilingual rather than the least multilingual State!)

S.A, besides the most general reference to a multicultural society, makes no specific comments on the population.

V. takes further its analysis of population in its chapter on The Language Needs of Children, perhaps the best chapter in the whole statement, giving an illuminating breakdown on the NES school population. The elaboration of 10 categories of NES child,from one monolingual in a LOTE to one virtually monolingual in English but with occasional exposure to another language in the family, will become an important tool for langauge planning. It gives us a synoptic view of the range of relationships that can obtain with a LOTE, and also, diagnostically, can alert us to different achievable outcomes in language learning and programs for different populations. This is a more fine-grained approach than that of Q. and S.A.

Q. makes the traditional (but not, thereby, false) distinction between native speakers of English and of LOTEs. The more elaborate distinctions of V. enables it to give wider scope to its proposed programs than does Q's bifurcation of the population - most notably, V. envisages that one objective of language programs could be to give a

standard form of a LOTE to supposed native speakers, those who speak a variety of the LOTE in a heavily dialect or English-influenced form.

Both V. and Q. stress, however, that regardless of how much CLOTE learning is promoted for CLOTE speakers, the needs of students from English-speaking families need to be addressed. Both statements detail benefits for these speakers in participating in language programs, mentioning both interaction in a multicultural community and more general cognitive benefits. Both statements consequently target the English-speaking population as well in their suggested programs.

However, V. clearly does not see itself as the even-handed advocate of languages for all (as does S.A.). Having detailed the needs of both LOTE and English speakers, it nevertheless returns to advocate that 'the specific needs of students from non-English speaking backgrounds require urgent attention and should be given high priority' (V:11). Priority should particularly be placed on developing language programs in primary schools, and this on grounds held to be established by research that 'the general educational outcome for children from non-English speaking backgrounds may be directly affected by their ability to continue their cognitive development in their first language'(V:11)

Further, the potential of that group to reach 'high levels of bilingualism' (V:11) and thus be a community and national resource is stressed, as is the general ease of learning languages at an early age. All these arguments are combined to argue clearly for language maintenance to become a crucial priority from the earliest years of primary schooling. The argument regarding bilingualism is a particularly strong feature of V., and one which presents a substantially new input into language discussion: bilingualism has rarely, if ever, been the aim of previous second language programs, and indeed even with mass post-war migration it took the language teaching profession several decades to begin to respond positively to the presence of potentially bilingual students.

Q. supports language maintenance equally strongly in terms of its rationale for LOTE learning, particularly in terms of the cognitive and psychological support it gives to its students, but it goes on to argue for programs which, we shall see, may be at odds with its intentions here.

Compared to the keen debate on this issue in V. and Q., S.A. sets no priorities.

All three statements are however united on the need to see LOTEs which are spoken in the community as fully legitimated languages among others in the school curriculum, with the same emphasis on long-term programs, links from primary to secondary schools, and the same academic and cultural benefits. There is a painstaking attempt to avoid

some of the vexing questions that have marked past language wars in the language teaching profession: which languages are to receive priority? why teach community rather than traditional languages? etc.

V. does buy into this indirectly with its emphasis on maintenance for LOTE speakers, but in this it reflects the policy lead given in Ministerial Paper 6 for 'languages used in the Australian community'. This formulation, perhaps surprising in its boldness, attests to the strength of the community language movement in Victorian educational circles, but may also signal there will be future battles and reactions to be fought.

(Such wars with the older established modern language profession it seems should not be inevitable. Interestingly, earlier papers for QMCC were developed in consultation with the Queensland Modern Language Teachers Association - from a Victorian perspective, such an alliance may appear fantastic - showing that the language wars that divide southern language teachers may not be universal. It could be of use to NACCME to gain further information on this Queensland alliance.

S.A. deals with this issue only symbolically: it makes no mention of specific languages or category of languages, apart from one mention that mother-tongue speakers of a LOTE should 'wherever possible' be given opportunity to study these formally. But on its front cover S.A. prints an endless sequence of the names of some 20 languages, thus signifying an apparent parity of status and purpose. It sets no priorities.

Conceptualization of languages and conceptualization of programs

What kinds of language programs do the various statements want?

It is here that the crucial differences already outlined in scope and objectives are felt most deeply. In S.A., no specific programs at all are indicated, and it is not clear what kinds of programs (eg language awareness, bilingual) could or could not be supported. The stated 'central aim' of language learning is given in the most general intellectual and linguistic terms: 'the development of the learner's ability to communicate fluently, accurately and appropriately in the chosen language'(S.A:Statement of Policy).

S.A. is clearly not based upon the kinds of concern for linguistic diversity, social interaction and language resources that motivate V. and Q. It is above all a sober, deliberate restatement of the value of traditional language programs, now extended to primary school (the issue of primary school languages is of course a welcome development but not unique to this policy statement nor to this particular moment in South Australian education). The one

acknowledgement in S.A. of the existence of native LOTE speakers (S.A: Statement of Policy, 4th point)is the only slight deviation from a statement and set of assumptions that could in many cases have been produced decades ago and having no connection with multiculturalism.

In contrast, V. and Q. give definite but differing views of what language programs should be implemented.

What they agree on is (second) language learning programs.

What they partially disagree on is bilingual programs.

Q. proposes language awareness programs, not mentioned in V.

V. proposes mother-tongue maintenance and development programs, which are only partially envisaged in Q.

Some of these differences are crucial.

The partial disagreement on bilingual programs gives an excellent example of the differing assumptions (and, it should be stressed, different educational and social environments) reflected in the two statements. Q. argues that bilingual education can be of two kinds - transition (where the objective is ultimately to shift to English, using the student's mother-tongue LOTE as a starting point), or maintenance (where parts of the curriculum continue to be taught in different languages). One important assumption here in Q. is that both kinds of bilingual programs are envisaged only for speakers of LOTEs.

Q. then goes on to argue that despite the positive outcomes that maintenance programs may have, they are likely to be severely restricted in scope:

> 'Given the constraints imposed by the diversity of school populations, it is not considered feasible to implement maintenance bilingual education in the secondary school at this stage.'(Q:5)

The diversity of school population, a marked feature of the scattered nature of ethnic settlement in Queensland, is thus seen as a stumbling block. Transition programs are also considered in reference to the nature of the population, and are encouraged where there are sufficient students of the one language background. Such programs would 'allow the children to make a smoother transition from home to school and from first language to English (Q:5).

Yet Q's statements on bilingualism may be going against its own professed championing of multiculturalism. Although there is no specific mention of target populations, it is possible that Q. envisages that transition bilingual programs should be developed specifically for newly arrived migrant or refugee youth (as is argued in V:10). But, if this is so, then what happens to multiculturalism if the aim is transition to English only, and only migrant students are in the program? If Q's reasoning has been accurately read here, then there is

a conceptual link between migrancy and the need for transition to English as quickly as possible. Such a link reflects pre-multicultural thinking of migration.

What is the relationship between migrancy and multicuturalism (in any of its meanings)? The two are clearly closely linked in common parlance,but it should be stressed that this is a contingent, not a necessary link: it is possible, for example, to imagine multiculturalism to be an objective of social policy even if,a la Birrell,migration were to cease. Conversely, not every policy that assisted migrant settlement is an aspect of multiculturalism.

This may be to put a construction on Q which it would reject. However, there appear to be serious flaws in its thinking on bilingual education: it tends to equate the methodology of bilingual instruction for the purpose of eventually learning English (which may well be a preferred alternative to ESL) with bilingual programs per se. Moreover, as we have seen it argues that dispersal of population makes maintenance bilingual programs unfeasible, but that where there are particular population concentrations there should be transition bilingual programs. And English-speaking students have no place in any kind of bilingual program.

In contrast, V. opts for the maintenance model, with one aim being to allow students 'to develop competence in the standard form of their first language'(V:10), and including English speakers as a clientele for such programs, reflecting the existence of the few now increasingly established experiments in this direction in Melbourne. As V. points out, there is considerable diversity among English speakers in terms of their exposure to other languages and interest in and attitude to them, and they can be recruited to well organized bilingual programs, whose aim is certainly not eventual transition to English.

Without in any way detracting from the serious Queensland issues of dispersal of populations, Q's narrowness in not seeing English speakers as potential bilingual recruits means that it denies itself part of its potential clientele.

Q. also argues for 'language awareness programs', something not mentioned in V. There has often been, in other contexts, considerable disparagement of such programs (particularly from language activists in southern states!) but more serious questions are at stake than simply personal or regional preference.

Most broadly, this is an issue for NACCME: multicultural funding of course coversnot only language programs. Q, whatever may be southern views of its linguistic naivety, is explicitly propagating forms of language learning for the purposes of multicultural education. As part of this, some aspects of multicultural education will not per se be

language learning. Schools are encouraged to evolve a diversity of ways of creating multicultural education programs. If, moreover, there is a belief that language learning of some kind can contribute to the social understandings spoken of earlier (acceptance of difference etc), then it is a question as to just how much language learning needs to be done before these beneficial effects begin to declare themselves. In evaluating this proposal, it should be noted that Q's proposed activities for language awareness courses, described as

> 'meaningful language experiences such as singing songs, reciting rhymes, counting, listening to stories and playing games' (Q:4)

are - unfortunately or not - very similar to the actual achievements of some ethnic schools, even some with stridently maintenance ideologies.

To this author, the Q. proposal for language awareness programs may represent a dead end in language teaching, no more and no less than the case of similar achievements in ethnic schools. For LOTE speakers, such programs cannot develop language to an extent to enable students to participate linguistically in their ethnic community. However, this author is less dogmatically sure that the shortcoming for LOTE speakers is the same as that for English speakers: if linked to subsequent language learning programs in the same or future schools, such language awareness programs may indeed recruit to language learning. But that only raises the further, and circular, question of why a real language learning program was not mounted in the first place.

Clearly, the question of resources is vital, and that is not addressed in Q. If one has, as in Victoria, 130 supernumerary teachers specifically employed in community language programs, if one has tertiary colleges producing trained language teachers for all levels of the school system, one may declare the Q. proposal to be inadequate and a watering-down of real language teaching. Yet even acknowledging the resources question, it is still not quite clear what Q's intentions are with these language awareness programs. Perhaps the thinking is that, with limited resources, these language awareness programs, which in all likelihood will not be taught by qualified language teachers, may be the best that many primary schools will be able to do, and will give their kids some exposure which may pay dividends in secondary school in terms of familiarity with language, and of course may besides that have more immediate social benefits. Perhaps the view is different, that within the aim of multicultural education this kind of language awareness program is useful not per se but to foster a particular view of culture and social interaction. There could be room for QMCC and NACCME to work to clarify some of these issues.

The problem ultimately rests not with Q. but with the central notion of multiculturalism that it has to work with. There are very few indications of what is not, or cannot represent itself as, multicultural education. The problem is not one of definitions but of how theoretically and practically distinctions can be made within programs, and priorities developed. In Q, it becomes impossible to declare out of bounds any even miniscule amount of language awareness if it is stressed that it is only a means towards an end of multicultural awareness. Where language is thus beholden to multiculturalism, there is no evaluation possible of the language input. Working on this issue could be urged as a particular priority of NACCME. From this author's perspective, the struggle will be endless until the concept of multiculturalism is itself eliminated as a concept in policy implementation.

NACCME should be certain of what concept of multiculturalism is understood in Q. The clearest statement of that comes perhaps not in Q's text but in its attendant iconography of multicultural education: the photograph of a child mama serving spaghetti to a boy European gentleman mit Hut can be seen as a parody - or an accurate reflection - of a particular kind of multicultural education which NACCME must pronounce on.

Commitment, testability and criteria of success

V. gives us an explicit set of language program goals of an immediate, intermediate and long-term nature, with clearly enunciated administrative, training and industrial issues identified for treatment. The statement puts a time element into Ministerial Paper 6's policy initiatives, and proposes that

> 'a concerted effort be made over the next fifteen years to expand the teaching of languages other than English from P-12 so that by the year 2000 a continued study in one or more languages becomes part of the normal educational experience of all children.'(V:12)

It also sets a bottom line of commitment from schools: 'a program requires at least three hours spread over the course of the school week' and this will become a demand of all schools agreeing to mount language programs.

S.A. also attempts to consider issues of resources and commitment, but it gives no timeframes, couching its recommendations in a more cloudy rhetoric:

> 'It is the ultimate goal of the Education Department that all students have the opportunity at some time during their formal education to learn at least one language other

than English.'(S.A:Statement of Policy)

But although it mentions issues of adequate resources and continuity, the questions of its vague terminology remain: How long will be the 'some time'? How far off is the 'ultimate goal'?

Beyond this fuzzy statement of intended goals, S.A. does join with V. in identifying necessary systemic and structural support. Most positively of all, S.A. announces that

> 'a Departmental management plan for language teaching will be developed and this will ensure that access, choice and continuity in language study can be realised within the constraints of resources.'(S.A:Implications)

Issues of continuity, access, changes in programs, cooperation between schools, assessment and curriculum development are also mentioned as implications of the announced policy, but there are some curious gaps: in the case of staffing it announces that

> 'the Department will support the professional development of language teachers through inservice programs and advisory services, and by supporting opportunities for teachers to develop their language proficiency here and overseas.'(S.A:ibid)

Yet, in contrast to V, there is no mention of pre-service teacher training or tertiary courses for such (see V:15-17). V. also identifies some acute industrial issues regarding the status of language teachers, integration into school staffs, and the employment of supernumerary teachers. S.A. seems to feel that in-service and some other material and training rewards will entice teachers. It would seem that the whole issue of teacher training is of vital concern to NACCME, and is an area in which the Commonwealth government has a direct interest.

By contrast Q, not being an implementing document of the same order, does not address systemic implications but instead directs questions to individual schools considering introducing language programs. Interestingly, they are very much the same questions as in V. and S.A, except couched in the garb of individual school choice:

> 'Is there a suitably qualified language teacher available? Are suitable resources...available to support the program?'(Q:5)

which of course are not questions for individual schools at all, and in most cases be beyond the wit of any one school to solve. Again, it is submitted, this approach reflects the relatively powerless position of QMCC towards its education bureaucracy, and its concern to ensure that at least the federal funds now received do get some grass roots response perhaps before more systemic claims can be made.

Several different questions of evaluation and testability are

raised by the various programs proposed. Beyond more general questions of the worth and justification of multicultural education, are a set of questions about the efficacy of the methods proposed to meet the objectives indicated. Perhaps this can best be explored by stepping back and asking of the three statements: what would we have to see to be able to say that their objectives had been met? How would languge learning have to have changed in order to claim success?

For S.A, couched as it is in long-term generalities, the answer may well be "very little": Given the evasiveness of its 'ultimate goal', even a slight increase in LOTE learning could be claimed as success. Even a slight improvement of timetable allocation and management support could be cited as showing the workability of the policy. In fact, anything other than an absolute decline in language learning could serve that purpose (of course, arresting decline in language learning could itself be an important policy objective, but S.A. does not talk about that).

Q. would have somewhat different criteria of success: if appropriate funds were distributed to fund the programs outlined, then the objectives of Q. would be met. Yet this only raises further questions: what proportion of programs would need to be language awareness/language learning/bilingual education? What if the vast majority were in only one category? But this may be again to slightly misread the intention of Q: its general tone is of advice and detailed help to schools on how to start thinking about multicultural education. It could very well be that it outlines these sorts of programs because at the moment they are not being developed in Queensland schools, and that even what might appear to southern eyes to be minimal demands for language awareness and second language learning programs are not being successfully implimented at the moment. In other words, an evaluation of the success or otherwise of Q. may very much depend upon what the actual state of multicultural education is in Queensland. This author is in no position to comment on this, but these questions would warrant attention by NACCME.

If V. is the clearest in objectives and specific timescales and resource implications, it also raises the question of just what kinds of evaluation and testability could be useful in monitoring future outcomes? In answering this it is important to recognize that this encompasses two quite different questions, related to at least two quite different target populations: one is the ability to target specific groups of students identified as benefitting from mother-tongue programs. The success of maintenance programs could in a sense could be conceptualized independently of any wider moves in language learning: indeed this has been the recent history of language learning in Victoria.

where a steady increase in language learning among some groups has occurred even though absolute language learning numbers may be static or declining.

The other question relates to the total language learning population, the majority of English monolingual students. Although conceptually the targeting of this population could be considered a distinct issue, there are very strong reasons, which V. and Q. articulate, to see these two as being essentially linked, particularly in terms of fostering multicultural awareness: 'To see language study as a matter of concern only to those of non-English speaking backgrounds, is quite inadequate as a response to the nature of the society as a whole'(V:13). But also related are more general questions of the status of languages in the school program, and demands on total school resources. V's championing of bilingual education both for LOTE and for English mother tongue speakers gives us a new avenue of approach: the ability of schools to persuade parents that such language learning can be useful for everyone is perhaps the only guarantee that such programs will be adequately supported and that such programs are not seen as relevant only to 'the migrants'.

The statements produced are at the moment very dependent upon overseas research, and within that upon very specific outcomes of positive cognitive aspects of second language and mother-tongue learning. Whatever one feels about the immediate research on Swedish and Finnish, or Spanish and English, a longer perspective on research on bilingualism (a field well over half a century old) reveals important historical shifts in assumptions and methodologies, shifts governed often by broader social and ideological concerns, and it would be wise to start to find our own research traditions and methodologies. This author does not believe that even the best overseas research will convince any school system, teachers or parents (or students:) to decide for or against particular programs; dissemination of such research may better arm people already committed, which is itself not a negligible achievement, but it does not give us a research or evaluation strategy.

In terms of detailed evaluation, there seems to be a clear need for both a minimal head-counting (of students, of the number of programs, of resources etc) and for more ideographic studies that reveal how the actual programs are conducted, and most of all show how the target populations actually perceive, study and use the languages. We have a few such studies, for example Marta Rado's, with their close scrutiny of how bilinguals relate to their languages, and to the social system. We need similar ideographic studies on how English speakers in

language programs perceive and use LOTEs. Beyond the hopeful assumptions that this language learning provides insights into other cultures, or promotes tolerance (posing it would seem insurmountable problems of proof and evidence) it could be possible to find real gains, achievements that students actually register and use for further purpose. Such ideographic studies might also enable us to evaluate more thoroughly some of our more hopeful assumptions as well. For example, in V. we read that one potential benefit for English-speakers learning a CLOTE would be in relation to local LOTE communities, giving 'greater access to, and contact with, that language and with the culture and people associated with it'(V:3). Now, does this actually happen? What is the linguistic aspect of that contact? Does the language give access? To, say, the Italian community in Melbourne? Or does it give more access to Italians when travelling in Italy?

And similar questions need to be asked of the many categories of V's Non-English mother tongue speakers. How do those with little communicative power nevertheless see their heritage language? What motivates changes in this orientation?

In conclusion

The three language policy statements, in very different ways, give us an enthralling synoptic view of the state of language learning in Australian schools, and of the many possible future directions this could take. In the last decade there have been immense struggles over understanding issues of language teaching, community languages, ethnic identity. The three language statements represent, almost by accident, several different stages along the way of these understandings. For Q, the struggles are still alive and daunting at the very basic level: to obtain some recognition for multicultural education which so far, at the highest levels, has been denied. V. reveals the strength of ethnic community organization, having the Education Department place languages 'used in the Australian community' as its highest language priority. This is a strong educational statement, now that many of the social objectives have been recognized.

S.A. is both a throwback to the past and perhaps a glimpse of the future: in its neutral, almost evasive style it seems to avoid more issues than it addresses. With so much of the statement conditional and open-ended, perhaps the purpose was to play down certain language conflicts, which have marked other recent South Australian language reports. Yet it may also thereby diffuse the vitality that such conflict signals. S.A. may be an example for the future, when perhaps in all states language policy documents will be written without any discrimination between languages and without the need to constantly proselytise for one view of language teaching.

By taking very seriously all the issues raised in these three statements, we may very slowly move towards a situation where languages other than English gain a secure, legitimate and valued place, rather than a conflicting one, within Australian schools.